

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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FROM: Tripoli

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 647, February 11, 1953

UNCLASSIFIED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY

G. M. Razi

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REDEPCIRTEL 811, January 29.

The Mutual Security Program in Libya concerns only Point Four activities, which are carried on through the Libyan-American Technical Assistance Service. This bi-national organization completed its first year of existence December 1952.

A. The prime problems confronting the MSA program in Libya are:

(1) The new nation is barely one year old, lacking sufficient financial resources to carry on normal functions of government, and dependent on friendly powers for funds and trained administrative and technical personnel to provide normal government services.

(2) Libya's economy is based primarily on agriculture which is confined to a narrow costal strip along the south shore of the Mediterranean. Agricultural production is very low due to an insufficient water supply obtained entirely from ground water resources, and ancient agricultural practices prevail. The low food production and resulting malnutrition weakens the resistance of the population to disease. In many population centers, the incidence of trachoma is as high as 90 percent, causing a serious drain on the nations productive labor force. The lack of a basic education system stems from the fact the Libya has been a colony throughout its history prior to independence on December 1951. Previous colonial powers provided so little for native education that illiteracy is estimated to be 97 percent.

B. Major recent accomplishments in our objectives:

(1) A rural extension service of US technicians has been organized and established to bring to the Libyan farmer and livestock producer improved agriculture techniques and practices. Two vocational agricultural schools, the first of their kind in Libya, have been established for training Libyan youth to become future agricultural extension officers. US experts in education have assisted in formulating basic federal education legislation and have assisted in the establishment of two teacher training centers each for men and women, two technical training centers

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to produce native teachers, artisans, clerical and administrative personnel. US public health technicians have organized and started training Libyans to combat trachoma and related eye diseases by use of modern anti-biotic drugs administered by mobile medical teams, and are establishing a basic school health program. Both programs will help provide Libya with a more healthy and productive labor force. To increase agricultural production, four US technicians are studying the possibilities of developing additional ground water for irrigation purposes, and preliminary surveys indicate that additional ground water reserves are available.

2. The TCA country director has been made a member of the Libyan Government Economic Planning Committee which reviews and directs the plans for the over-all economic development of the country. He also serves as an official observer without voting rights on the Libyan public development and stabilization agency, and the Libyan Finance Corporation. The first of the last named organizations administers permanent capital investment for the economic development of Libya; the latter assists by providing credit facilities for private agricultural, industrial and commercial projects. Both of the above organizations support and supplement programs and projects initiated by Point Four in Libya.

All of these activities are interdependent and essential for the development of a viable economy and stable government for the new Western democracies. An American air base and the military forces of other friendly powers in Libya emphasize the importance of the south shore of the Mediterranean.

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